

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PARK BOARD
HELD AT CITY HALL
October 8, 2013
7:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Steel called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. WELCOME NEW STUDENT MEMBERS

Chair Steel welcomed the two new student members, Julie Johnson and Sarah Good.

III. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call were Members Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson, Good, Johnson
Member Deeds arrived at 7:14 p.m.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Chair Steel asked to add the "Urban Forest Task Force Report" under Reports and Recommendations.

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Peterson, approving the addition of the "Urban Forest Task Force Report" to the meeting agenda.

Ayes: Members Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson.
Motion carried.

Member Peterson made a motion, seconded by Member Cella, approving the amended meeting agenda.

Ayes: Members Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson.
Motion carried.

V. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member Peterson made a motion, seconded by Member Cella, approving the consent agenda as follows:

V.A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Park Board Meeting of September 10, 2013

Ayes: Members Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson.
Motion carried.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None.

VII. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VII.A. Quality of Life Survey Results Presentation

Bill Morris, Decision Resources, indicated the survey results overall were very positive. He explained the methodology as well as the demographics of the survey. He highlighted some of the findings of the city at large, including the high satisfaction rating of citizens, a "benign" climate about property taxes, and satisfaction with city services.

Mr. Morris then highlighted the results from the Parks & Recreation portion of the survey, including the rating of the quality of parks, maintenance of parks, usage of parks, as well as whether the parks or facilities represented the vision of the City of Edina. He indicated 97 percent of households feel the

existing recreational facilities are meeting household needs. Mr. Morris described 84 percent of residents do not leave the city to recreate elsewhere. He highlighted the varying levels of support for various new or improved facilities, and the varying levels of support for increased property taxes to pay for new or improved facilities.

Chair Steel questioned how to interpret the result that 65 percent have not participated in programming, while 0 percent chose the “I don’t know” option. Mr. Morris explained that particularly among older residents, they may be referring to an experience long ago, or may be hearing from children or grandchildren in the community what is going on. He noted that Edina is one of the best-informed communities in the Metro, both in the city surveys and the school district surveys.

Chair Steel commented that she would rather weigh the opinions of people who are using programming rather than those who are not.

Mr. Morris indicated that when considering a referendum, there will be more people voting who do not use programming than those who do use programming. If the programming or facilities are lagging, that information needs to get out. Dealing with less-than-excellent kinds of things is a hard thing to admit to the public, but the need has to be established before the public will consider supporting a tax increase.

Chair Steel asked whether further investigation needs to be done on recreational programming for people not participating. Mr. Morris noted there are two key reasons why people do not participate: lack of time and lack of interest.

Member Deeds asked Mr. Morris about general leanings among the public for a \$50 per resident property tax increase. Mr. Morris estimated a 40 percent chance of passage in an off-year election.

Member Deeds noted that 99 percent level of satisfaction is really over-the-top. He asked what the Board should do with these numbers. Mr. Morris indicated that in order to move the population, it will be essential to frame it as “we are good, but we can be a lot better in these areas”.

Member Segreto noted a 62 percent opposition to athletic field renovation. Mr. Morris indicated that is very high, especially given the use of the fields. This issue must be framed as more future-oriented, so people start looking forward instead of what exists today.

Mr. Morris noted that Edina’s population is highly segmented in terms of interest (arts, athletics, performing arts, parks, etc.)

Member Jones asked about trends. Mr. Morris indicated Decision Resources has only completed one other survey, in 2011, so there is not enough data to establish trending. He noted there is not as much tax hostility as exists in other communities.

Chair Steel questioned whether, going forward, the focus should just be on improving programming quality for existing participants rather than expanding the number of participants. Mr. Morris noted that one trend is an unwillingness to participate in long-term classes. People prefer something occurring for a single day rather than spread out over six or seven days. He noted that real ideas are going to be generated from current participants.

VII.B. 2014-2015 Budget Presentation

Scott Neal, City Manager, provided an overview of the budget. He noted staff uses two-year operating budgets, and in the off-year staff works primarily on the Capital Improvement Program.

Six general themes were identified at the strategic planning meeting: infrastructure, workforce, communications, community vision, aviation noise, and commercial and mixed-use redevelopment. He noted a number of other factors in the budget process, including a 3 percent levy limit imposed from the legislature, a substantial sales tax exemption for many of the city's activities, a 13.3 percent increase in health care costs, increase in the police/fire retirement fund, and requests for additional city staff.

Mr. Neal discussed the preliminary proposed tax levy that was approved in September, at the rate of 3 percent. The budget would increase 2.7 percent for 2014 and 4.1 percent in 2015. He explained that in 2013 the city government will spend a little under \$90 million and will collect a little over \$90 million.

Mr. Neal provided a high-level look at Parks & Recreation spending. In 2015 Parks & Recreation will spend \$13 million, 90 percent of that occurring in the enterprise funds.

Member Deeds asked why Centennial Lakes is an enterprise facility. Mr. Neal responded he is not sure. He noted that the in 2010 City Council asked staff to split Edinborough Park from Centennial Lakes in the budget, and that has been done. The City Council has asked the same question about whether a cost-recovery expectation should exist for Centennial Lakes.

Member Deeds commented it would be nice to have more realistic budget numbers presented that include depreciation and capital improvement recovery.

Mr. Neal noted Edina has not been able to fully fund the Equipment Replacement Fund since 2008; the city is now at 80 to 85 percent of a fully funded level.

In response to a question from Member Deeds, Mr. Neal explained the city has paid off some debt in order to put itself in a position to be able to levy additional monies, if needed, while keeping spending flat. He noted that in 2017 another big debt service payment will be coming off the books as well.

Mr. Neal noted two bond issues were sold just a month ago, and the rates were 2.5 and just under 3 percent.

Member Peterson asked whether any cities are moving towards a 401K style retirement. Mr. Neal indicated Minnesota statute requires pension-style retirement.

In response to a question by Member Peterson about cost recovery goals Mr. Neal indicated there is a lot of data being collected, and it needs to be put into a formula that staff and the Park Board agree on.

Chair Steel asked if the legislature will address levy limits again. Mr. Neal stated he does not expect it to be part of the 2015 budgeting.

Member Jones asked for a copy of the preliminary budget the City Council passed. Mr. Neal responded affirmatively, noting it is posted on the city's website as well. She also commented if 13 percent is a normal level of the budget to be spent on Parks & Recreation. Mr. Neal indicated the 12 to 15 percent range is a normal range for cities the size of Edina.

VII.C. Fees and Charges

Ms. Kattreh introduced the fees and charges document, noting a column was added this year for explanations for increases, decreases, and changes.

Member Deeds noted the arena is running relatively low recovery rates, and they will probably worsen. Susie Miller, Braemar Arena General Manager, noted the arena is keeping with the market. The prime rate is \$205 and Bloomington is \$185. On the non-prime season that has increased revenues by about \$200,000. She noted a lot of cities are subsidizing the ice arenas at about 80 percent cost recovery. She noted there have been great increases by about 35 percent since 2010. She stated the non-prime ice hours have increased substantially over the last two years.

Member Deeds asked how the arena can close the gap. Ms. Miller indicated since depreciation is included in the budget number, the arena cannot substantially increase fees enough to close the gap.

Member Jones asked about a new rink. Ms. Miller stated as long as the building costs do not have to be recouped, it would be a net gain because staffing would not have to increase.

Member Jones noted energy costs are quite high at the arena. She asked if there is any way to conserve energy. Ms. Miller indicated she has talked with Ms. Kattreh about exploring solar energy since the roofs are perfect for it. She agreed it is very expensive to run an ice arena, especially during the summer.

Member Deeds asked whether it is cost-effective to run all three sheets in the summer. Ms. Miller responded that research shows if 30 hours a week of ice time is sold, it is worth it to run the sheets. She noted staff is working at reducing energy costs.

Member Deeds asked about the comparatively low cost of using the Golf Dome as compared with an open facility. Todd Anderson, Braemar Golf Course General Manager, responded it may be cost prohibitive to increase much beyond \$8.75 or \$9 per bucket. He noted the price is increased on the weekends.

Chair Steel asked about residents and non-residents during the winter in the Golf Dome. Mr. Anderson responded probably 70 to 75 percent of users are non-residents.

Member Peterson asked about competitors to the Golf Dome. Mr. Anderson cited two competitors in Edina and one in Chanhassen. The new rate increases will capture \$140,000 next year. The Golf Dome will be operational on November 1, barring unforeseen complications.

Ms. Kattreh added that the Fred Richards Golf Course debt was paid off this year, and that debt was being directly charged to Braemar.

VII.D. Urban Forest Task Force Report

Ms. Kattreh provided an overview of the task force, which was a project of the Energy and Environment Commission. The City Council has approved the plan and has asked EEC to work with the Park Board and discuss an approach for implementing the plan.

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Peterson, to add the Urban Forest Task Force as part of the 2014 Work Plan as amended.

Ayes: Members Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson, Deeds.

Motion carried.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

VIII.A. Council Updates

None.

VIII.B. Other Correspondence

None.

IX. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Jones asked for an update on the Veterans Memorial sculpture. Ms. Kattreh indicated the Veteran's Committee is trying to determine ways to lower the overall cost of the project. Research was done to find a sculptor from the local area who would work, and a sculptor from Wisconsin was found who would do the sculpture for significantly less. Their intention is to continue to gather information from the sculptor in Wisconsin.

Member Jones commented the Park Board should be able to weigh in on sculptures permanently displayed in parks. The last sculptor was approved, and she would like to make sure the process for change is something the Park Board is involved with. Ms. Kattreh agreed, and anyone from the Park Board is welcome to serve on the Veteran's Memorial Committee or attend their meetings. She noted the Park Board will see any new designs.

Ms. Kattreh indicated the committee has wanted to hire a consultant to do designs and plans for the memorial itself. The City Council voted to give the Veteran's Memorial Committee half of the \$38,000 allocated to the memorial. There is a local architect interested in doing the designs for \$19,000, which is half of what SEH proposed. This architect needs to provide a scope of services and also sign a contract with the city.

The Park Board discussed a possible conflict of interest with the sculptor joining as a member of the Veteran's Committee.

Member Segreto asked about the timeline of this project. Ms. Kattreh stated the original sculpture was accepted a year ago. Member Segreto suggested there is a leadership issue, and she encouraged a hard timeline. Ms. Kattreh indicated the goal is to get the plans and specs drawn up, and they will then solicit in-kind donations.

Member Peterson noted the fundraising has been a challenge to the Veteran's Memorial Committee, whose members signed up because they are passionate about creating a veteran's memorial.

Chair Steel indicated the Park Board knows people with experience and who can help the Veteran's Memorial Committee.

Member Jones asked about the city's relationship with Yorktown Skate Park. Ms. Kattreh indicated the city has a relationship with the YMCA, but the YMCA completely operates the skate park. She would have to look into the specific contractual arrangement.

X. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Kattreh stated that currently staff is working to prepare a presentation to the City Council on Monday night regarding the sports dome and outdoor rink.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Steel made a motion, seconded by Member Deeds, to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Ayes: Members Deeds, Jones, Steel, Cella, Segreto, Peterson.

Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.